VARANUS PRASINUS (THE EMERALD GOANNA) ON MOA ISLAND, TORRES STRAIT, AUSTRALIA. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum 34(1)130. 1993:-* A specimen of *Varanus prasinus* (QM transparency NM 791, E. Mattock) was observed in closed mesic forest on Moa Island (10°11'S 142°16'E) recently. This is the only record of this species in Australia this century, and is the southernmost record for the species.

Moa Is., formerly Banks Is., is a relatively large continental island (700km^2 approximately) in the central part of the Torres Strait. There are two small villages on the island. Diverse native vegetation, most of which is undisturbed, predominates. At higher elevations on and around Moa Peak (374m), there is a closed mesic forest. This is now one of the few large patches of closed mesic forest in Queensland in which virtually no herpetological survey work has been done.

Accompanied by Mr T. Moore, Ms E. Mattock and Mrs A. Torenvwek, we climbed Moa Peak on 28 August, 1993. At about 180m, from a rocky outcrop, we saw a specimen of *V. prasinus* basking in bright sunlight on a broken tree top, about 10m from the ground. The specimen was bright green, with black chevrons along its back. It was slender and had a snout-vent length of approximately 30cm. Its long, slender tail was curled, not used to hold on to the tree.

V. prasinus is well known in Papua New Guinea, but is recorded in Australia only from Dauan (formerly Cornwallis) and Mer (formerly Murray) Islands in the Torres Strait (Günther, 1877, 1879; Boulenger, 1885). These two islands are in the northern and eastern portions of the Torres Strait. Cogger (1992) reports *V. prasinus* in the far northern Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea. There are no recent records of *V. prasinus* in Australia. No Australian specimens are held in the collections of the Queensland or Australian Museums (Covacevich & Couper, 1991; R. Sadlier pers. comm.).

Records of *V. prasinus* from the McIlwraith Range area of Cape York, reported by Czechura (1980), have been shown to be based on specimens of *V. teriae* (Sprackland, 1991). Sprackland (1991) also described a new species of tree goanna, *V. telenestes*, from Rossell Island, Papua New Guinea, from material previously treated as *V. prasinus*. This raises the possibility that the specimen we observed on Moa Island may also be an endemic island taxon. Future collection and taxonomic evaluation of the green goanna on Moa Island will clarify this. This observation emphasises the importance of the closed mesic forest on Moa Island.

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J.M. Whittier & D.R. Moeller, Department of Anatomical Sciences, University of Queensland, Queensland, 4072, Australia; 7 September, 1993.